UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/408
30 September 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 105

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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ABBREVIATIONS

DAM	Department of Administration and Management
DDSMS	Department of Development Support and Management Services
DESIPA	Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPCSD	Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FALD	Field Administration and Logistics Division
HC/CHR	United Nations High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights
INTORG	Inter-organizational bodies Joint Inspection Unit Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions International Computing Centre Information Systems Coordination Committee
OCSS	Office of Conference and Support Services
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budgeting and Accounts

REGCOM	Regional Commissions Liaison Office
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the United Nations Staff Pension Committee
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission established by the Security Council pursuant to Security Council resolution 687 (1991)
WFP	World Food Programme

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations states that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. Equality for women continues to be mandated by the General Assembly and remains the framework for action for the United Nations Secretariat. As we approach the next millennium, it becomes increasingly important that both women and men participate actively and visibly in all aspects of the work of the Organization and that the Organization fully maximizes the talent and potential of its most valuable resource - its staff.

2. In its resolution 51/67 of 12 December 1996, the General Assembly reaffirmed the goal of a 50/50 gender distribution overall in posts subject to geographical distribution. In resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997 the Assembly reiterated the goals set for the achievement of gender equality by the year 2000 and called, among other things, for the appointment of more women in senior decision-making positions to reach mandated targets, as well as an increase in the number of women employees from developing countries, in particular those which are unrepresented or underrepresented.

3. The previous goal of 35 per cent representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution mandated by the General Assembly was met in the United Nations Secretariat in 1996. However, the matching goal of 25 per cent women at the D-1 level and above has yet to be achieved. The same applies for the Assembly's current goal of 50 per cent women overall and including senior-level posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000.

4. Since assuming office in January 1997, the Secretary-General has been faced with the responsibility of reaching these mandated goals within the time-frame set by the General Assembly. While progress to date has been limited, especially at senior decision-making levels, the Secretary-General has pledged his personal commitment towards meeting this responsibility and assured the Assembly that the issue of geographical representation and gender balance will be given the highest priority in his continuing efforts to bring about a new management culture in the Organization. The Secretary-General is also well aware that the Organization has only a little over three years to meet its targeted goals.

5. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its request in resolution 51/67.

II. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STATUS

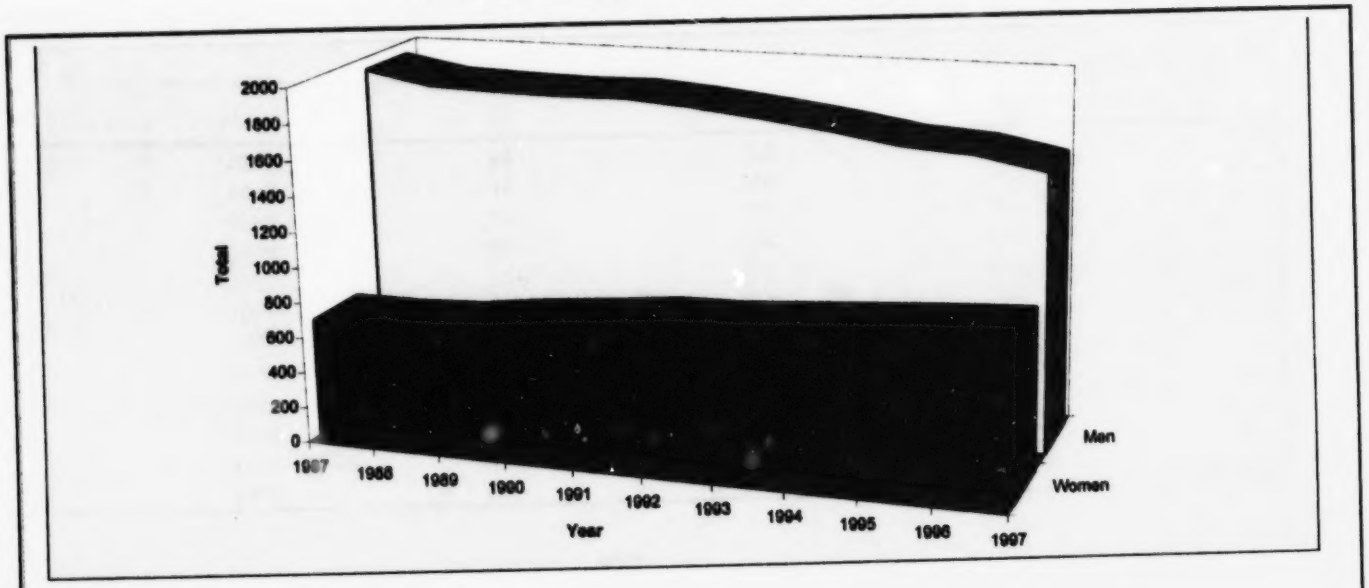
6. There are two aspects to the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. The first is to reach the numerical targets set by the General Assembly for the year 2000, which is the quantitative indicator the Organization is moving towards. This numerical aspect encompasses not only the aggregate total, but also the distribution of women in the various occupational areas. The second aspect is qualitative, that is, that the work environment of the

Organization should be sensitive to and supportive of the need of its staff, both women and men.

7. To monitor the improvement in the numerical balance among women and men in the Secretariat, the Office of Human Resources Management prepares quarterly monitoring tables for distribution to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, senior managers and the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women, among others. These data show the gender distribution of staff by department or office, as well as by grade for staff in the Professional category and above in posts subject to geographical distribution.

8. Figures 1, 2 and 3 and table 1 show the progression in the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution, by gender, level and region as well as for language and technical cooperation posts. In the 12-year period from 1985 to 1997, the representation of women has increased by 13.6 per cent, or slightly more than the at least 1 per cent approved in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.[1] The tables indicate also that the percentage of women in Professional posts, whether by geographical distribution, technical cooperation or language has yet to reach the mandated targets.

Figure 1. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution as at 30 June each year since 1987



Year	Men	Women	Total	% Women
1987	1,928	666	2,594	25.67
1988	1,858	663	2,521	26.30
1989	1,844	679	2,523	26.91
1990	1,836	725	2,561	28.31
1991	1,841	759	2,600	29.19
1992	1,811	797	2,608	30.56
1993	1,769	804	2,573	31.25
1994	1,720	830	2,550	32.55
1995	1,658	857	2,515	34.08
1996	1,632	882	2,514	35.08
1997	1,560	901	2,461	36.61

Source: Previous reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/42/636, A/43/659, A/44/604, A/45/541, A/46/370, A/47/416, A/48/559, A/49/527, A/50/540, A/51/421 and OHRM.

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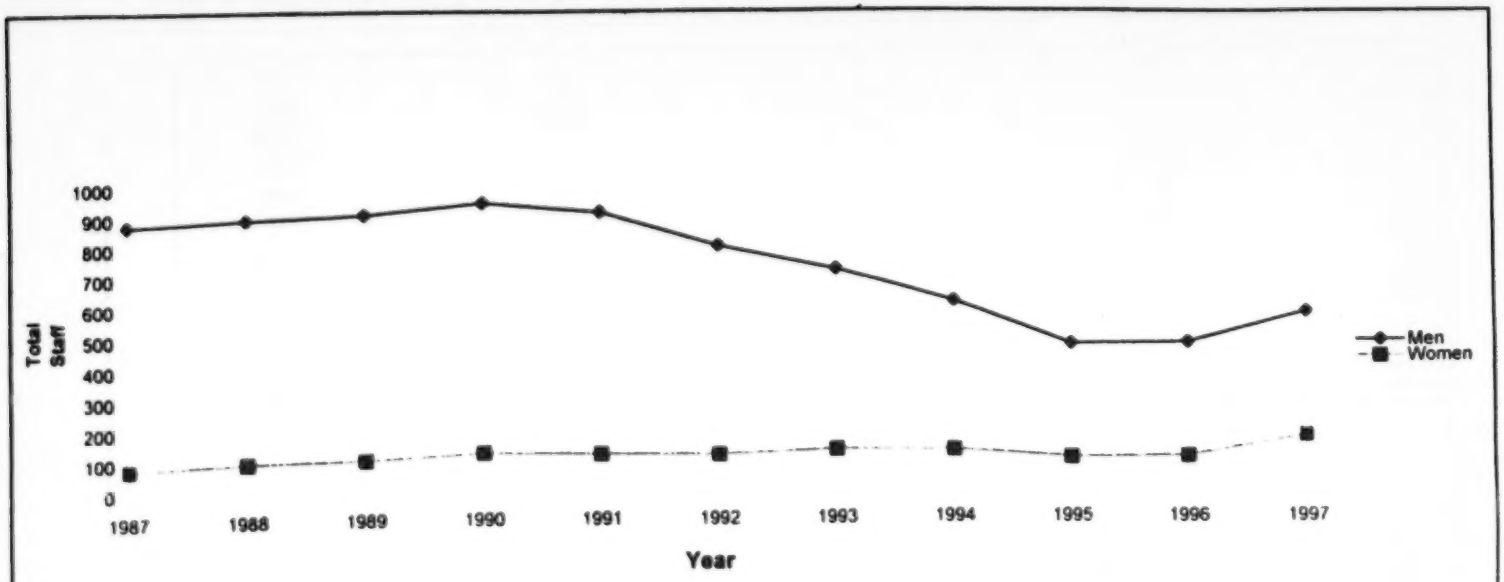
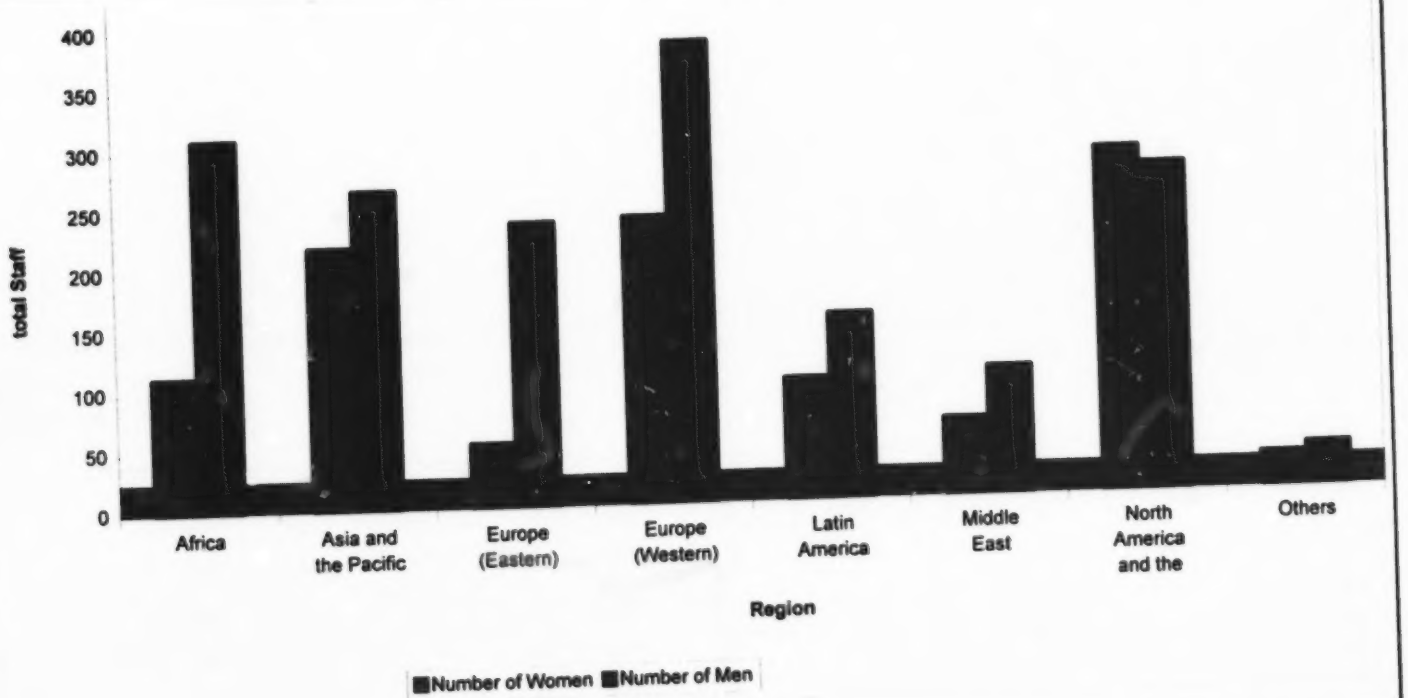
Figure 2. Gender distribution of staff in technical cooperation posts as at 31 December each year



Year	Men	Women	Total	% Women
1987	881	87	968	8.99
1988	898	102	1000	10.20
1989	911	109	1020	10.69
1990	947	130	1077	12.07
1991	916	125	1041	12.01
1992	805	122	927	13.16
1993	726	136	862	15.78
1994	616	131	747	17.54
1995	476	106	582	18.21
1996	481	109	590	18.47
1997	582	177	759	23.32

Sources: ACC/1988/PER/R.33, ACC/1989/PER/R.11, ACC/1990/PER/R.6, ACC/1991/PER/R.28, ACC/1992/PER/R.22, ACC/1993/PER/R.16, ACC/1994/PER/R.13, ACC/1995/PER/R.20, ACC/1996/PER/R.10 and OHRM.

Figure 3. Staff in the Professional category and above in posts subject to geographical distribution by region and gender as at 30 June 1997



Region	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Africa	87	284	371	23.45
Asia and the Pacific	193	240	433	44.57
Europe (Eastern)	28	211	239	11.72
Europe (Western)	214	358	572	37.41
Latin America	76	129	205	37.07
Middle East	39	81	120	32.50
North America and the Caribbean	261	247	508	51.38
Others	3	10	13	23.08

Source: OHRM.

Table 1. Number of women and percentage of female staff in the Professional category and above

Level	Geographical posts as at 30 June 1987			Geographical posts as at 30 June 1997			Language posts as at 30 June 1997			Language posts as at 30 June 1997		
	Women	Men	Percentage of women	Women	Men	Percentage of women	Women	Men	Percentage of women	Women	Men	Percentage of women
USG	2	24	8	1	17	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
ASG	2	20	9	2	12	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
D-2	2	81	2	12	51	19	-	-	-	-	-	-
D-1	24	204	11	47	167	22	-	-	-	-	-	-
P-5	54	421	11	149	300	33	42	106	29	51	85	37.5
P-4	149	522	22	229	436	34.4	112	205	35	118	236	33.3
P-3	238	444	35	276	375	42.4	132	247	35	122	219	35.7
P-2	165	200	45	185	201	48	36	94	28	26	21	55.3
P-1	30	12	71	-	1	-	1	-	100	-	-	-
Total percentage of women		25.7			36.6			33.12			36.1	

Source: Previous reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (see footnote to fig. 1).

A. Women in posts subject to geographical distribution by level and department

9. Table 2 shows the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by department and office during the reporting period. Currently, this percentage is 36.6 per cent, compared with 25.7 per cent in 1987. Among the 28 departments and offices with over 20 staff reviewed, 3 have achieved or surpassed the goal of 50 per cent women overall in posts subject to geographical distribution. These are OHRM, DAM and DPCSD.[2] Excluding these 3, 12 have exceeded 35 per cent and 12 have not. These latter 12 offices and departments are DHA, DAM/OCSS, DPKO/FALD, DESIPA, ECLAC, ECA, ECE, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNCHS, UNCTAD and UNOV.

10. While the overall percentage of women in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution reached 36.6 per cent by 30 June 1997, women remain confined largely to the lower ranks. As at 30 June 1997, there was only one woman Under-Secretary-General as compared with 17 men in the same level. The situation has remained unchanged since 30 June 1996. In the same period, only 2 of the 12 Assistant Secretaries-General were female, as compared with one woman out of a total of 15 in 1996. In 1997, 20 per cent of the staff in D-2 posts were women as compared with 19.7 per cent in June 1996. There was better progress in the reporting period at levels D-1 and P-5, with 22 and 33 per cent women in geographical posts respectively, compared with 19.3 and 27.8 per cent in June 1996.

11. Table 3 shows departments and offices with women at D-1 level and above. Out of 28 offices and departments with more than two posts at the D-1 level and above, only 10 have reached the goal of 25 per cent in these positions. These are DAM/OHRM, DAM/OCSS, DDSMS, DPI, ECA, ECE, EOSG, UNJSPF, UNEP and UNOV.

12. The numbers of women at the level of D-1 and above reflect continuing difficulties in shattering the "glass ceiling" within the Organization. The situation of women at senior decision-making levels must therefore remain an area of continuing attention and efforts. It should also be noted that, when examining data for a critical mass of women, that is, at least 30 per cent at any given level, the picture varies with occupational areas, departments and levels. In public information and administrative occupations (such as DPI and DAM/OHRM), women represent a critical mass, including at the D-2 level. In other departments and offices, such as DPA and ESCWA, the great concentration of women compared with men can be found at the P-2 and P-3 levels, respectively.

Table 2. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat by department or office and by grade, staff in the Professional category and above in posts subject to geographical distribution as at 30 June 1997

Department/ office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand total	Percentage of women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
UNSCOM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	100.0
DAM/OHRM	-	-	1	-	1	2	1	2	5	10	9	12	10	10	6	7	-	-	33	43	76	56.6
DAM	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	5	4	2	7	1	2	2	2	-	-	14	16	30	53.3
DPCSD	1	-	-	1	3	1	10	2	13	12	11	18	3	9	4	8	-	-	45	51	96	53.1
UNEP	-	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	3	-	-	7	7	14	50.0
DPI	-	-	1	-	3	2	12	5	17	16	31	29	34	43	27	28	-	-	125	123	248	49.6
UNJSPF	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	6	2	5	6	6	6	-	1	-	-	19	16	35	45.7
DDSMS	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	12	7	16	11	8	10	1	3	-	-	41	34	75	45.3
DAM/OPPBA	-	-	1	-	4	-	3	-	7	9	10	9	11	13	10	6	-	-	46	37	83	44.6
HC/CHR	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5	2	12	6	10	9	4	9	-	-	33	26	59	44.1
UNDCP	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	6	2	5	8	8	7	3	4	-	-	27	21	48	43.8
INTORG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	4	3	7	42.9
DPKO	1	-	2	-	2	-	9	-	3	4	14	9	11	15	5	3	-	-	47	31	78	39.7
UNOG	1	-	-	-	2	-	7	1	5	7	11	4	17	13	14	12	-	-	57	37	94	39.4
EOSG	1	-	-	1	1	-	4	2	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	-	-	16	10	26	38.5
OLA	1	-	-	-	4	-	5	1	8	6	10	7	10	6	7	8	-	-	45	28	73	38.4
DPA	1	-	3	-	7	1	11	5	17	12	23	15	13	11	7	7	-	-	82	51	133	38.3
OIOS	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	8	1	9	8	8	2	3	6	-	-	32	18	50	36.0
UNON	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	2	4	-	2	2	-	-	11	6	17	35.3
REGCOM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	33.3
DESIPA	-	-	-	-	3	1	10	2	9	10	25	10	21	6	11	9	-	-	79	38	117	32.5
DAM/OCSS	-	-	1	-	3	1	13	5	15	7	23	10	24	15	11	5	-	-	90	43	133	32.3
DHA	1	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	10	3	6	5	5	3	2	4	-	-	32	15	47	31.9
UNCHS	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	1	3	2	10	1	5	6	2	1	-	-	24	11	35	31.4
ESCAP	1	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	16	2	29	12	23	11	11	13	-	-	89	40	129	31.0
UNOV	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	2	7	2	11	5	13	7	2	1	-	-	38	17	55	30.9
ESCWA	1	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	12	2	21	2	4	9	5	7	-	-	49	21	70	30.0

Department/ office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand total	Percentage of women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
DPKO/FALD	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	1	7	4	11	1	6	4	2	3	-	-	31	13	44	29.5
ECLAC	1	-	-	-	1	-	8	3	14	6	34	8	25	12	17	11	-	-	100	40	140	28.6
UNCTAD	1	-	-	-	1	1	17	1	35	6	39	8	39	25	16	9	1	-	149	50	199	25.1
ECE	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	15	1	16	6	17	7	11	3	-	-	65	19	84	22.6
ECA	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	4	30	3	34	7	36	13	13	7	-	-	122	34	156	21.8
UNCC	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	6	-
Total	17	1	12	2	51	12	167	47	300	149	436	229	375	276	201	185	1	-	1 560	901	2 461	36.6

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Table 3. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat by department or office and by grade, D-1 and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution as at 30 June 1997

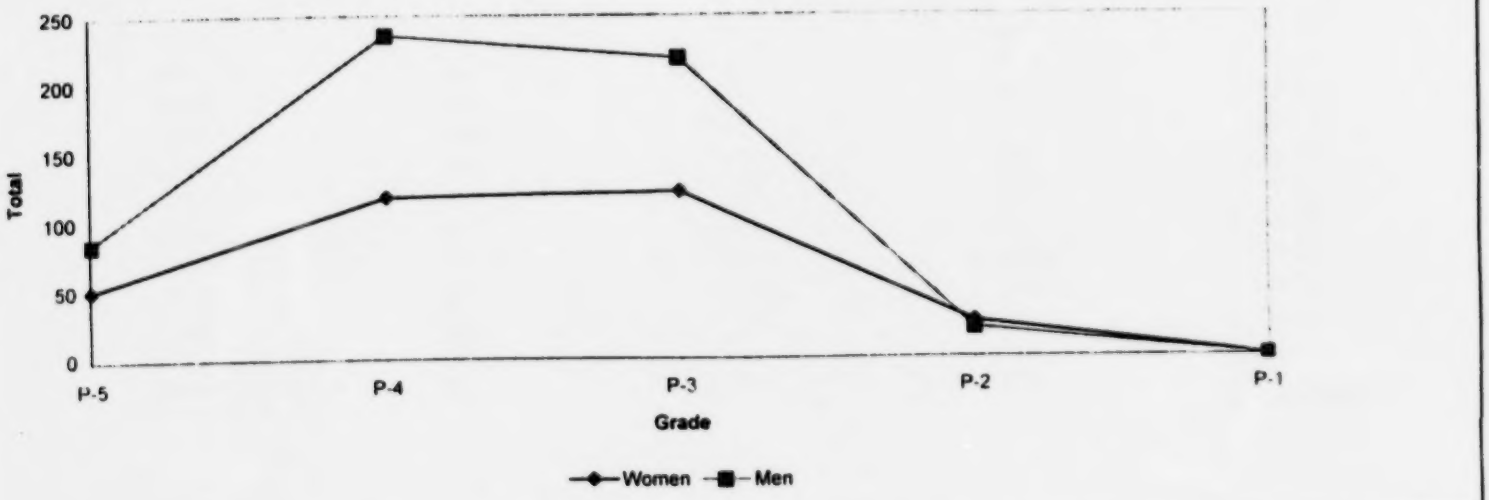
Department/ Office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		Total		Grand total	Percentage of women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
REGCOM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	100.0
DAM/OHRM	-	-	1	-	1	2	1	2	3	4	7	57.1
DDSMS	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	4	3	7	42.9
UNEP	-	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	3	2	5	40.0
UNJSPF	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	1	3	33.3
ECA	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	4	9	4	13	30.8
DPI	-	-	1	-	3	2	12	5	16	7	23	30.4
UNOV	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	2	5	2	7	28.6
SG	1	-	-	1	3	-	4	2	8	3	11	27.3
DAM/OCSS	-	-	1	-	3	1	13	5	17	6	23	26.1
ECE	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	6	2	8	25.0
ECLAC	1	-	-	-	1	-	8	3	10	3	13	23.1
DPCSD	1	-	-	1	3	1	10	2	14	4	18	22.2
DPA	1	-	3	-	7	1	11	5	22	6	28	21.4
OIOS	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	4	1	5	20.0
DAM	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	4	1	5	20.0
UNCHS	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	1	4	1	5	20.0
DESIPA	-	-	-	-	3	1	10	2	13	3	16	18.8
ESCAP	1	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	10	2	12	16.7
DPKO/FALD	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	1	5	1	6	16.7
ESCWA	1	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	7	1	8	12.5
UNCTAD	1	-	-	-	1	1	17	1	19	2	21	9.5
OLA	1	-	-	-	4	-	5	1	10	1	11	9.1
UNOG	1	-	-	-	2	-	7	1	10	1	11	9.1
DPKO	1	-	2	-	2	-	9	-	14	-	14	-
DHA	1	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	9	-	9	-

Department/ Office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		Total		Grand total	Percentage of women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
UNDCP	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	5	-	5	-
DAM/OPPBA	-	-	1	-	4	-	3	-	8	-	8	-
HC/CHR	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-
UNCC	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	4	-	4	-
INTORG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNON	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNSCOM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	17	1	12	2	51	12	167	47	247	62	309	20.1

B. Women in posts subject to special language requirements

13. As shown in figures 4 and 5, the percentage of women in posts subject to special language requirements by grade remained constant at 36.1 per cent. Posts with special language requirements range from levels P-1 to P-5. The staffing complement of some of the language services still consists predominantly of male staff. Many of the other units concerned have a favourable ratio of women to men. Some of the units that provide services in certain of the Organization's official languages are staffed predominantly by men. Because of the low staff turnover, there is no immediate prospect of improvement in the situation.

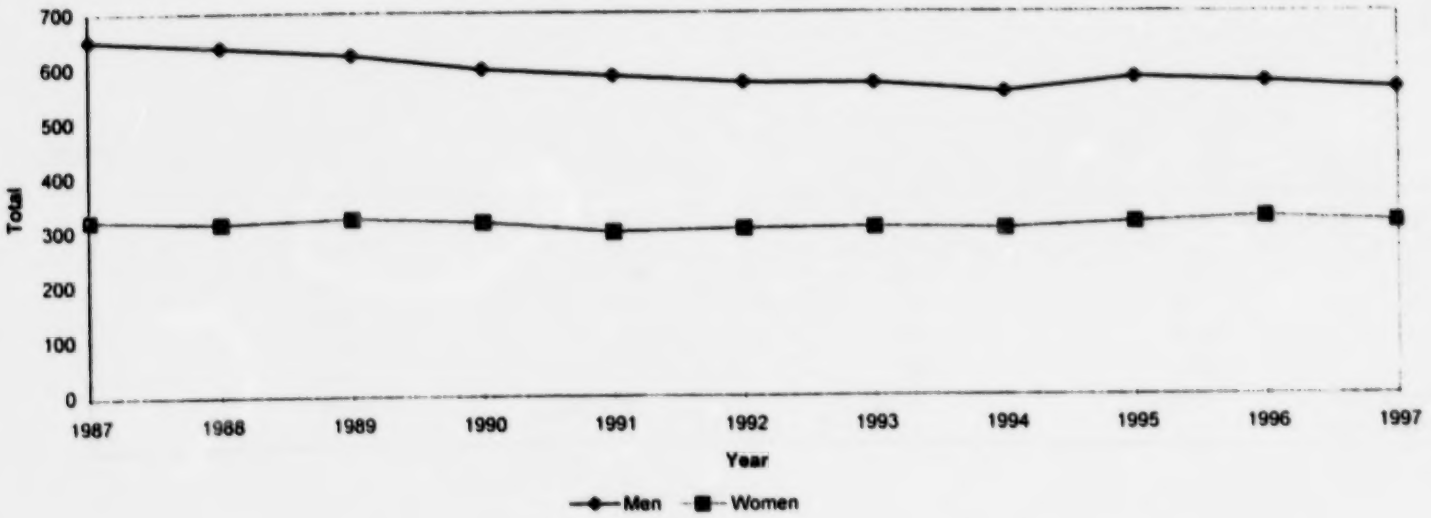
Figure 4. Gender distribution of staff in posts with special language requirements by grade as at 30 June 1997



Level	Women	Men	Total	Percentage of women
P-5	51	85	136	37 50
P-4	118	236	354	33 33
P-3	122	219	341	35 78
P-2	26	21	47	55 32
P-1	-	-	-	0 00

Source: OHRM.

Figure 5. Gender distribution of staff in posts with special language requirements as at 30 June each year since 1987



Year	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of women
1987	652	323	975	33 13
1988	639	316	955	33 09
1989	624	324	948	34 18
1990	598	317	915	34 64
1991	586	299	885	33 79
1992	574	306	880	34 77
1993	572	308	880	35 00
1994	555	304	859	35 39
1995	582	317	899	35 26
1996	574	327	901	36 29
1997	561	317	878	36 10

Sources: Previous reports of the Secretary-General on the composition or the Secretariat (A/42/636, A/43/659, A/44/604, A/45/541, A/46/370, A/47/416, A/48/559, A/49/527, A/50/540, A/51/421) and OHRM.

C. Women in the General Service and related categories

14. The majority of women working in the United Nations system are in the General Service and related categories. In fact, women in the General Service and related categories have surpassed the goal of 50/50 gender balance and currently stand at 54 per cent. However, while women in the General Service category stand at 56.6 per cent, there is no gender balance in the Security Services and Trade and Crafts categories, with the former with only 4.1 per cent women (8 women out of a total of 195 officers) and the latter with only 3.0 per cent women (6 women out of a total of 196). Table 4 shows the distribution of staff by gender and level in this category. For General Service staff the critical point is the dividing line between Professional and General Service categories. The breach can be made only by being successful in the G to P examination, which has come to be regarded as the most objective avenue for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category.

Table 4. Gender distribution of staff in the General Service and related categories promoted during the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1997

	1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996					1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997				
Level	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Promotion within department/ office	Promotion across department/ office	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Promotion within department/ office	Promotion across department/ office
G-7	2	4	67	6	-	1	15	94	16	-
G-6	7	22	76	29	-	12	37	76	47	2
G-5	14	57	80	69	2	12	42	78	53	1
Total	23	83	78	104	2	25	94	79	116	3

Source: OHRM/secretariat of the Appointment and Promotion Board.

15. Table 4 reflects the lack of mobility between departments and offices. OHRM is in the process of establishing a working group to consider and develop additional programmes and processes to support the career development of General Service staff, in particular women. The working group would review, inter alia, some of the following issues: lateral and vertical mobility within and between departments and offices; the system for placement and promotion; growth in place; and length of time spent in post/grade.

16. OHRM issued a Career Development Handbook in November 1990 designed to serve as a tool for career counselling and to help staff members in the General Service category to assess their career choices. OHRM is planning to update the Handbook to reflect the new structural changes and realities of the Secretariat.

D. Promotion and placement

17. The application and monitoring of the special measures set forth in administrative instruction ST/AI/412 of 5 January 1996 and its precursor, ST/AI/382 of 3 March 1993, on special measures for the achievement of gender equality has had a favourable impact on the promotion rate of women, in spite of the financial difficulties and restructuring exercise faced by the Secretariat during the reporting period. Table 5 illustrates that in 1997 there were a total of 38 promotions as compared with 196 in June 1996. Even though there was a decrease of 1.8 per cent in the overall percentage of promotions of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, the percentage of promotions for women at the D-1 and P-5 levels has increased considerably as compared with the previous year, thus increasing the pool of women eligible for promotion to senior decision-making levels in the near future.

Table 5. Gender distribution of staff in the Professional category and above promoted during the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1997

	1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996			1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997		
Levels	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Men	Women	Percentage of women
D-1	14	8	36.36	7	5	41.7
P-5	35	20	36.36	4	5	55.6
P-4	38	26	40.63	7	2	22.2
P-3	28	27	49.09	5	3	37.5
Total	115	81	41.32	15	23	39.5

Source: OHRM/secretariat of the Appointment and Promotion Board.

General Service and related categories

18. During the reporting period the overall percentage of women promoted in the General Service was 79 per cent. Table 4 shows that the number of promotions of staff at the GS-7 has increased markedly from 6 in 1995-1996 to 16 in 1996-1997. Ninety-four per cent of GS-6 staff promoted to GS-7 in the current year have been women as compared with 67 per cent last year. However, a previous study showed that out of the staff at levels GS-5 and GS-6, only some 6 per cent of the total General Service staff population would reach the GS-7 level to perform para-professional functions during an average career span of 25 years.

E. Appointments

19. Recruitment, one of the main tools for improving the percentage of women in the Professional category and above (especially at the D-1 level and above), was slowed during the freeze on recruitment due to the financial crisis (14 September 1995-21 April 1997) as shown in table 6. Out of a total of 40 newly appointed staff, 17 were women. Of these, the regional spread was as follows: Africa: 8, of whom 5 were women; Asia and the Pacific: 3, none of whom were women; Eastern Europe: 1 (male); Western Europe: 14, of whom 8 were women; Latin America: overall 1 (male); Middle East: 2, of whom 1 was a woman; North America and the Caribbean: 11, 3 of whom were women.

Table 6. Gender distribution of staff in the Professional category and above appointed during the period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1997

	1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996			1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997		
Levels	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Men	Women	Percentage of women
D-1	5	0	0	7	5	41.7
P-5	6	5	45.5	4	5	55.6
P-4	23	14	37.8	7	2	22.2
P-3	16	23	59.0	5	3	37.5
Total	50	42	45.6	23	17	42.5

Source: OHRM/secretariat of the Appointment and Promotion Board.

20. In order to reach the mandated goals on gender balance, OHRM is in the process of creating a database of recruitment sources, which will consist of professional associations and organizations of various types, including women's organizations, sorted by occupational groups and with special attention paid to having full representation of all regions. Owing to the cost and time requirements of executive searches to identify women candidates for high-level vacancies, very few were performed that led to higher-level appointments.

21. Efforts to achieve gender balance are also under way in many other parts of the United Nations system. It is important to note that a number of specialized agencies and programmes have also made a concerted effort in order to improve the status of women in their respective organizations. While UNFPA has fully reached and surpassed the goal of 50/50 both in senior-level positions and overall, for example, others, such as UNESCO (37.1 per cent), UNHCR (38.5 per cent in core Professional levels), and UNDP (33.5 per cent core Professional) showed marked increases in their number of female staff. WFP alone doubled the number of its female staff at the P-5 level and above between

1992 and 1997. At this point, no comprehensive statistical information on gender balance in the system is provided to the General Assembly. The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming recommended that the Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women be regularly provided with statistics on the number and percentage of women at all levels throughout the United Nations system.[3] It is intended to provide more detailed and comprehensive data to the Assembly in future reports.

III. MEASURES UNDERTAKEN FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

22. As a first step towards fulfilling his commitment to improving the status of women in the Secretariat, in February 1997 the Secretary-General appointed a Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. In this capacity, the Special Adviser reports directly to the Secretary-General on matters relating to the improvement of the status of women and assists him in ensuring system-wide coordination of policy for implementing the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. The office of the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat has been transferred from OHRM to the Office of the Special Adviser.

23. In implementing the General Assembly mandates on the status of women in the Secretariat, the following measures have been undertaken to reach mandated goals. These measures are aimed at both the achievement of numerical goals, as well as the creation of a gender-sensitive work environment and of a management culture that is attentive to the needs of all staff.

A. Special measures for women

24. The special measures for the achievement of gender equality mentioned in paragraph 17 above were issued in January 1996 in an administrative instruction (ST/AI/412). By consolidating all the special measures introduced since 1977 that document was intended to enhance institutional compliance with the special measures and streamline their implementation. In the 18 months since its issuance, it was instrumental in aiding the Organization's efforts to achieve gender equality in its human resource policies and practices as well as sensitizing staff to gender issues. However, in that time it also became apparent that certain provisions of the text needed clarification and that others were inconsistently applied. Experience also demonstrated that there was a need for improved measures to monitor and enforce aspects of the special measures.

25. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 51/67 and on the basis of reports from individual departments and offices, including OHRM, as well as in response to observations by the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat and the Group on Equal Rights for Women, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, in consultation with the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, convened a working group, which they co-chaired, to review and revise ST/AI/412. Following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/226, the Working Group

also considered any modifications to the special measures necessitated by that resolution.

26. On the basis of this review, the Working Group expects that some changes to substantive measures will be introduced to ST/AI/412 and its implementation. The discussions focused, inter alia, on enhancing the monitoring of capabilities and efforts, both administrative and electronic.

27. The implementation of special measures and existing policies for gender balance have been upheld by the Administrative Tribunal in two recent decisions. In Judgement No. 671 (Grinblat, 1995) and Judgement No. 765 (Anderson Bieler, 1996), the Tribunal upheld the legitimacy of corrective measures in favour of women. These decisions now provide greater weight and authority for the observance and implementation of the special measures and strengthen continuing efforts to improve the status of women in the Secretariat.

B. Improvement of the gender component in the performance appraisal system

28. Managerial accountability is a key component in the efforts to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. Hence, during the institutionalization of the new performance appraisal system, gender was identified as a mandatory responsiveness performance dimension to be taken into account in the appraisal of all staff members having supervisory and managerial responsibilities. However, there were no accompanying indicators of measurement in the context of the overall review of the first year of implementation of the system; the gender component will therefore be assessed in that light with a view to seeking ways to reinforce this aspect of the system as a means of promoting managerial accountability.

C. Gender sensitivity training

29. While gender factors are dealt with in most staff development programmes through the use of case-studies, specific gender sensitivity training programmes are also planned for pilot testing the latter part of 1997 and implementation over the next biennium. A training programme for senior officials of departments and offices will be designed to ensure that the Organization's leaders develop greater awareness of assumptions and perceptions regarding gender balance and a gender-sensitive work environment and how these affect the effectiveness of the Organization. It will also assist departments and offices in identifying areas for improvement and developing ways to provide a more supportive work environment for women and men.

30. A second type of training will address the need of the Organization to mainstream a gender perspective in departmental work programmes and reporting mechanisms. Training that emphasizes strategies to incorporate the gender perspective in all aspects of the substantive work of the Organization, for example, through the use of gender analysis, will be given to senior officials and middle-level managers starting in the first half of 1998 by OHRM.

D. United Nations harassment survey

31. In January 1995, the Joint Advisory Committee at Headquarters established the Joint Advisory Committee Task Force on Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, in the Work Place chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. The Task Force's membership comprised the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, as well as management representatives from the Department of Administration and Management, representatives of the New York Staff Committee, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and the UNICEF Staff Association.

32. The Task Force found that insufficient data was available on incidents of harassment in the United Nations workplace and that there were preliminary indications that staff were reluctant to report them. To fill that gap in information, the Task Force developed a survey questionnaire to assess staff members' experiences and perceptions of their workplace and to ascertain their knowledge of, and confidence in, existing policies and complaint procedures for dealing with harassment.

33. OHRM released the questionnaire in early July 1997, for distribution to the Secretariat worldwide, including peacekeeping and other field missions, and UNHCR. It was circulated in late 1996 to UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF staff at all duty stations. The deadline for the Secretariat to complete the questionnaire was 30 September 1997. Survey results are expected before the end of 1997 and will be utilized to re-examine and revise, as necessary, the United Nations policies relating to harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, and the formal and informal mechanisms for reporting and dealing with harassment.

E. Addressing family, work and life issues, including child care and elder care

34. An inter-agency task force including representatives of the Secretariat, UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Staff Committee was established in 1996 to address quality of work/life issues with a view to identifying staff needs and concerns in such areas as flexible working time and workplace possibilities, childcare and elder care needs, family leave policies and domestic partnership issues. The goal of the group is to foster an open discussion of various work/life innovations that have been initiated by corporate entities and various civil services around the globe. Such policies create a more supportive working environment, which recognizes increasingly conflicting work demands and their impact on the family and the personal lives of all staff, both men and women. Enacting such policies will allow the Organization to be more competitive in attracting and retaining the best employees. In particular, the issue of spousal employment and childcare need to be addressed if the Organization is to attract qualified women candidates. Member States may wish to review existing national legislation that impedes spousal employment for United Nations staff members and their families, thus encouraging recruitment and mobility practices of the Secretariat.

F. Information sharing, outreach and networking

35. Efforts to increase awareness of and support for initiatives to achieve gender balance as well as to develop a more gender-sensitive environment require the sharing of information on issues affecting women. The Special Adviser and the Focal Point for Women have addressed various sectors in the Organization on the mandates for gender balance. They have given statements, organized talks and discussions and participated in seminars to ensure that those mandates are observed and fully implemented. Initiatives to develop a mentoring system among women staff such as matching senior women with junior-level women are being pursued.

36. Membership in ORIGIN, an electronic network of senior women from across organizations within and outside the United Nations system who informally discuss and share experiences in gender balance and gender-sensitive work environment, provides a forum for exchanging information and lessons learned.

37. The Special Adviser and the Focal Point for Women, have visited several duty stations, such as the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic Commission for Africa, to obtain first-hand information from staff and administration about the actual situation on the ground, to discuss gender balance, conditions of service affecting women staff in these regions and implementation and compliance with the special measures for women as described in document ST/AI/412.

38. The Special Adviser addressed the twenty-first session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in June 1997. During the meeting, issues and concerns were raised regarding cooperation among duty stations on gender balance, the role of the special measures for women and the need for a unified recruitment policy, the need for realistic targets in the employment of women, the employment of spouses, the need to prepare women for managerial positions and in general ensuring that plans are put in place in each duty station to achieve gender balance.

39. The Secretariat, together with UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, the Staff Committee and the Group on Equal Rights for Women, celebrated International Women's Day on 7 March 1997, in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women commemorated on 10 March. Many events took place, among them a photo exhibit, displays of technological information resources for women, panel discussions on affirmative action, work/life/family issues, women at the peace table, gender mainstreaming and organizational change, and a presentation on mentoring. These events served as effective tools to create greater awareness of gender concerns, as well as to attract support for achieving equality and addressing stereotypical perceptions of women.

40. The Secretariat, in coordination with UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM, the Staff Committee and the Group on Equal Rights for Women, organized and celebrated Take Our Daughters to Work Day on 24 April 1997. The programme was organized to provide girls with role models and an opportunity to experience the work life in the different offices and departments of the United Nations. The

Secretary-General opened the meeting by addressing 500 girls ages 9 to 15 and answering their questions.

41. A quarterly newsletter, Network, first published in September 1996, is distributed to staff in the Secretariat, agencies, electronic networks and to permanent missions. It continues to be an effective tool for disseminating information about the status of women and updates managers and staff on policy developments affecting women in the Secretariat. As an information tool it helps to develop and maintain a network system among women and men for promoting gender equality by sharing opportunities for career broadening.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

42. Strategies to ensure that the gains made with regard to gender balance are preserved and strengthened continue to be implemented throughout the Secretariat. Institutional policies and mechanisms to translate commitments into practice need further refinement so as to provide managers and staff with more effective tools for achieving and monitoring the established goals within their respective units.

43. Some of the tools to help the Organization best utilize its human resources and bring about gender balance exist already and others are currently under review. While the special measures, when updated, will continue to provide a framework for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat until the mandated goal of 50/50 by the year 2000 is met, its full implementation will require stronger monitoring and accountability devices. Yet more has to be done to achieve the targets set for the year 2000 and to build the foundations of a policy of sustainability with respect to gender balance in the Organization.

44. A policy that will ensure the achievement of gender balance requires the strengthening of three main areas, recruitment and promotion; monitoring and accountability; and the retention of women. Each of these areas require a special focus and initiatives. Success in one area is dependent on the other two and requires the participation and commitment of not only OHRM, but also senior management and Member States. Strategies are in place to ensure that departments and offices that have an overall percentage of women of under 25 reach 35 per cent in the next year and that each department and/or office below 35 per cent has an increment of 5 per cent overall in the number of women in posts subject to geography in the next year. Over the next 10 years, some 4,500 staff will retire, thus increasing opportunities for achieving and sustaining the target of 50 per cent by the year 2000. Below are some recommendations for action by the United Nations:

Recruitment/promotion

(a) At least 50 per cent of all recruitment in the Professional category should be women in posts subject to geographical distribution and all other categories of posts, irrespective of the type or duration of the appointment;

(b) Where there is no viable pool of internal women candidates, executive searches should be undertaken for all posts at the D-1 and D-2 levels and the

names of the qualified candidates who are not selected should be kept on a roster for consideration for future vacancies;

(c) OHRM should develop and maintain a skill database of all staff members by occupational groups, including for General Service and related categories, which should reflect all relevant data, including but not limited to gender, nationality, educational qualifications and an area of special knowledge or experience, technical and language skills, years of work experience and positions held;

(e) OHRM should build a pool of women candidates for senior-level promotions and review the stock of potential candidates with each department and office accountable for its diversity progress and reviews;

(f) In the selection of candidates for temporary assignments to an encumbered higher-level post, due regard should be given to the need to broaden the experience of women staff members, including those in the General Service and related categories, so as to allow them full equality of opportunity.

Monitoring and accountability

(a) Heads of departments and offices should have primary responsibility for ensuring gender balance in their respective departments and offices. They should account for the manner in which they have carried out their responsibilities in an annual report submitted to the Secretary-General in April of each year through OHRM and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. All exceptions on recruitment, appointment or promotion should be included in such a report;

(b) Heads of departments and offices should inform OHRM of every vacancy foreseen six months before the post becomes vacant and of all other vacancies as soon as they occur in order to ensure a timely search for female candidates;

(c) The performance appraisal system, currently under review, requires a much stronger gender component in its appraisal of managers. Each department and office needs to have a long-term plan for achieving and sustaining gender balance within the time-frame specified and each manager must be held responsible to the Secretary-General for its implementation.

Retention of women

(a) Gender sensitivity training needs to be incorporated as a component of all existing training programmes. These should also include informal and formal activities to enhance a gender-sensitive workplace;

(b) While all staff are affected by conditions of service, including spousal employment and work/family/life issues, women often face greater barriers because of the stereotyping of their female roles and are disproportionately burdened by the problems emanating from family and care obligations. Recognizing the changes in family lives, and the need for a supportive working environment for professional women, the United Nations should

accelerate its initiatives, including a family/personal leave programme for women and men staff that would function within existing entitlements;

(c) Attracting and retaining staff is at present hindered by the inability of spouses of United Nations staff to work in many countries where United Nations offices are located. Member States should be encouraged to review existing national legislation together with the Secretariat in order to allow United Nations spouses to work, so that conditions will be favourable to attracting and retaining the brightest and most competent staff members;

(d) All gender-related grievances should be dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Women who have taken action to redress issues such as harassment, including sexual harassment, should not be negatively affected.

45. Enormous challenges remain if the numerical goals set for the year 2000 are to be achieved. While the United Nations is committed to ensuring that a sustainable change will take place in the long term in the Organization, the guidance and cooperation of Member States is one of the most important elements to guide the Secretariat in the pursuit of gender balance, not only to fulfil its own mandates but to provide the world with a model to be emulated.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1).

[2] The figures for DPCSD, DESIPA and DDSMS reflect the situation in those Departments before their merger into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as at 30 June 1997.

[3] E/1997/L.30, para. 36.